



GEORGE SCRATCHLEY BROWN

1 July 1974 — 20 June 1978

George Brown was born in Montclair, New Jersey, on 17 August 1918. His father was a West Point graduate and career cavalry officer. After high school in Leavenworth, Kansas, Brown attended the University of Missouri. He then followed in his father's footsteps and entered the US Military Academy, where he excelled as a cadet captain, regimental adjutant, and polo player.

Following his 1941 graduation and primary and advanced flight training, Brown served as a bomber pilot in Europe during World War II. He participated in the famous low-level bombing raid against the oil refineries in Ploesti, Romania, in August 1943. When the lead plane and ten others of his forty-plane group were lost, Major Brown led the surviving planes back to base. He received the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroism. Promotions came rapidly during World War II, and in October 1944 Brown attained the rank of colonel.

After the war, Colonel Brown served in a variety of command and staff billets. During the last year of the Korean War, he was Director of Operations of the Fifth Air Force in Seoul, Korea. After graduating from the National War College in 1957, Brown served as Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and then Military Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. He was promoted to brigadier general in August 1959 and served as Military Assistant to Secretaries of Defense Thomas Gates and Robert McNamara. Promoted to major general in April 1963, he commanded the Eastern Transport Air Force, McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, from 1963 to 1964 and

General George S. Brown
United States Air Force



General Brown in the cockpit of a UH-1 helicopter in South Vietnam, October 1968.

Joint Task Force II, a JCS all-service weapons testing unit at Sandia Base, New Mexico, from 1964 to 1966. After promotion to lieutenant general in August 1966, Brown became Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Two years later he received his fourth star.

From 1968 to 1970 General Brown served as Commander of the Seventh Air Force in Vietnam and Deputy Commander for Air Operations, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (USMACV). Responsible for all US air operations in South Vietnam, which he coordinated with those of the South Vietnamese air force, Brown advised the MACV Commander on all matters pertaining to tactical air support. He returned to the

United States in 1970 and became Commander of Air Force Systems Command, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland.

On 1 August 1973 General Brown became the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. In that position, he campaigned to upgrade the strategic bomber program. Brown pushed to replace the aging B-52s with B-1s, swing-wing aircraft that could carry the latest electronic equipment and twice the payload of the B-52s and penetrate deeper into Soviet territory.

Appointed by President Richard Nixon, General Brown became the eighth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 1 July 1974. He was the first Air Force officer since General Twining to fill the position. As Chairman,



General Brown visits US Marines during an exercise in Puerto Rico, February 1975.

Brown served under three Presidents during a period of limited budgets and constrained force structure.

A few months after becoming Chairman, General Brown made off-the-cuff remarks that led to a public rebuke by President Gerald R. Ford. In October 1974 during a question-and-answer session following a speech he had delivered at Duke University Law School, Brown suggested that Israel had undue influence over US national security policy and referred to the power of Jews and their money in the United States. When a public uproar followed, Brown apologized for his remarks. Nevertheless, in an interview published two years later, he made

similar comments as well as intemperate remarks about Britain and Iran. Despite this episode, President Ford and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld endorsed Brown's continuing as Chairman, and he served under President Jimmy Carter as well.

Strategic arms limitation talks took up much of General Brown's time as Chairman. He and the Chiefs stressed the need to maintain "essential equivalence," which meant finding a formula by which the US lead in missile re-entry vehicles would offset Soviet superiority in missile throw-weight. The Vladivostok accords of November 1974 established broad limits for both sides. Complex negotiations followed, centering on



General Brown with Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, November 1975.

trading ceilings on US cruise missiles for ceilings on Soviet Backfire bombers. These negotiations were nearing completion when General Brown retired.

After the US withdrawal from Vietnam, the South Vietnamese military was not successful in holding its own against the North Vietnamese forces. General Brown led the Joint Chiefs in urging US air and naval deployments to the area around South Vietnam to signal US support for the Saigon government. But public and congressional opposition to any further involvement in Vietnam precluded approval of any military action. Then in early March 1975, the North Vietnamese launched an offensive that quickly overran the South Vietnamese forces and climaxed with the fall of Saigon on 30 April.

General Brown participated in decision making over the US response to two con-

frontations in the Far East that were widely perceived as testing US will in the aftermath of the communist takeover of South Vietnam. On 12 May 1975, less than two weeks after the fall of Saigon, sailors of Cambodia's radical communist regime seized the US merchant ship *SS Mayaguez* on the high seas in the Gulf of Thailand. While jets from the carrier *USS Coral Sea* sank three Cambodian naval vessels and attacked a Cambodian air base, US Marines retook the ship and stormed Koh Tang Island, where they believed the crew was being held. This operation, which brought release of the crew, found wide support in the United States.

In August 1976, when North Korean guards killed two US officers and wounded several US and South Korean enlisted men trying to trim a tree in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing the two Koreas, President

Ford, at the strong urging of General Brown and the Chiefs, reinforced US forces in and around South Korea. Meanwhile, a large party of US and South Korean soldiers entered the DMZ and cut down the tree, which was obscuring surveillance of the zone.

General Brown played a crucial role in the success of the 1977 negotiations to transfer ownership of the Panama Canal from the United States to Panama. His willingness to

make concessions to Panama, softening the US position, made it possible to reach an agreement, and his support for the agreement was instrumental in securing the treaty's ratification by the Senate in April 1978.

Stricken with cancer, General Brown retired from active duty on 20 June 1978, ten days before the expiration of his second term as Chairman. Less than six months later, on 5 December 1978, he died.

George Scratchley Brown

General, USAF

Promotions

Dates

Temporary

Permanent

2LT		11 Jun 41
1LT	18 Jun 42	12 Jun 44
CPT.	20 Oct 42	
MAJ	13 Feb 43	03 Sep 48
LTC.	27 Aug 43.	12 Apr 51
COL	01 Oct 44	24 Apr 56
BG	01 Aug 59.	30 Jan 62
MG	01 Apr 63	27 Feb 64
LTG.	01 Aug 66	
GEN	01 Aug 68	

Assignments

Dates

From

To

Student, Primary and Advanced Flying Schools, Pine Bluff, AR, and Kelly Field, TX	1941	1942
Pilot, B-24 Transportation Training, 344th Bombardment Squadron, Barksdale Field, LA . .	1942	1942
Pilot, B-24; Flight Commander, later Commander, 329th Bombardment Squadron, 93d Bombardment Group, Barksdale Field, LA; Fort Myers Army Air Base, FL; Grenier Field, NH; England, and later Libya	1942	1943
Air Executive Officer, 93d Bombardment Group, Libya, later England	1943	1944
Assistant Operations Officer, 2d Bombardment Division, England	1944	1945
Assistant to Air Chief of Staff, Operations, Headquarters, Army Air Force Training Command, Fort Worth, TX, later Barksdale Field, LA	1945	1946
Assistant to Air Chief of Staff, Operations, Air Defense Command (ADC), Mitchel Field, NY.	1946	1948
Assistant Deputy Chief for Operations, ADC (later Continental Air Command), Mitchel Air Force Base, NY	1948	1950

Assignments	Dates	
	From	To
Commander, 62d Troop Carrier Group, McChord Air Force Base, WA.	1950	1951
Commander, 56th Fighter Interceptor Wing, Air Defense Command; later Commander, 4708th Defense Wing, Selfridge Air Force Base, MI	1951	1952
Assistant Director and later Director of Operations, Fifth Air Force, Korea	1952	1953
Commander, 3525th Pilot Training Wing, Williams Air Force Base, AZ	1953	1956
Student, National War College, Washington, DC. . .	1956	1957
Executive Assistant to Chief of Staff, US Air Force, Washington, DC	1957	1959
Military Assistant to Deputy Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC	1959	1959
Military Assistant to Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC	1959	1963
Commander, Eastern Transport Air Force, McGuire Air Force Base, NJ	1963	1964
Commander, Joint Task Force II, Sandia Base, NM. .	1964	1966
Assistant to Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC	1966	1968
Commander, Seventh Air Force and Deputy Commander for Air Operations, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.	1968	1970
Commander, Air Force Systems Command, Andrews Air Force Base, MD	1970	1973
Chief of Staff, US Air Force, Washington, DC. . . .	1973	1974
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC. .	1974	1978

Principal US Military Decorations

Distinguished Service Cross
 Defense Distinguished Service Medal
 Air Force Distinguished Service Medal (with 3 oak leaf clusters)
 Silver Star
 Legion of Merit (with 2 oak leaf clusters)
 Distinguished Flying Cross (with oak leaf cluster)
 Bronze Star
 Air Medal (with 3 oak leaf clusters)
 Joint Service Commendation Medal
 Army Commendation Medal